LETTER

ON THE

NATURE AND TENDENCY

OF THE

WHIG CLUB,

AND OF

IRISH PARTY.

—DUBLIN:—

P. BYRNE, 108, GRAFTON-STREET.

1791.

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LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

THE queſtion upon which you have done me the honour to aſk my opinion, is of ſo much importance to your future proſpects, that if I had leſs leiſure than I have, I ſhould feel myſelf bound to anſwer it. But I cannot preſume to give you an opinion merely; I will lay before you the reaſons on which it is founded; and I requeſt and truſt, that you will be no further influenced by me, than as you feel the force of them. You ſpeak to me of a party formed upon principle, aiming at a juſt reputation, and leading to no diſhonourable emolument at ſome future period—high pretenſions certainly—if they be well founded; and they ſeem to hold out to a young man, more than the ordinary advantages

of an Iriſh political life. To that ſtate, your ſituation, your talents, and your property, have called you—had your choice been free—but independence is not always free agency.

I ſhould not heſitate to adviſe you againſt your intereſt, if your fame or the intereſts of your country ſeemed to require the ſacrifice. To run the honourable riſques of party, in a country where parties *muſt* be formed, where they are interwoven with the nature of things, where public good cannot be purſued without them, is judicious and even inevitable. The parties in England, ſome of them I am ſure, more of them I hope, are parties founded upon principle:—They are founded upon a ſimilarity of ſentiment, on family connections, and on the more intimate alliances of eſteem and friendſhip. In the multitudinous ſea of Britiſh politics, an inſulated man is nothing. Amidſt the various relations which *they* bear to the civilized and uncivilized world, amidſt the various queſtions which muſt ariſe, as to liberty, good order, war, dominion, alliances, connections, colonies, comprehending altogether ſuch a ſyſtem of thought and action, as no one underſtanding can combine, and no human intellect can foreſee, the politician muſt call friendſhip and connection to his aid. He muſt provide one thing at leaſt, neceſſary to a ſucceſsful voyage (for it is the only thing which he can provide againſt every emergency) the aſſiſtance of men whom he can truſt, to whom he may with confidence

confidence ſubmit his opinion, when he has no leiſure or opportunities to form it, to whom he may propoſe without artifice, to whom he may yield without ſervility, and by whoſe connected exertions, wiſdom may be ſupported by power, and opinions may be moulded into ſyſtem.

You will tell me, "That your Whig Club is "built on a better baſis, on ſpecific meaſures of "public utility, *meaſures not men*—yet on men "too of high public principles. For that the "characters of men are canvaſſed before their "admiſſion!"

If it were ſo in fact!—But I have read a part of your catalogue, and to tell you my plain mind, I think your Whig Club is founded neither on ſuch men, nor ſuch meaſures. Some ſuch men I know it contains, and as to the meaſures, I think ſome of them to be not ill choſen—but I think your inſtitution of a Whig Club the *alloy* of both. Perhaps you may find, that a number of very reſpectable Gentlemen, and others of a very different deſcription, actuated by the various and diſcordant motives of honour, ambition, pride, vanity, diſappointment, hope, connection and perſonal diſguſt, found themſelves jumbled together, in a party on a ſudden, and that the policy of ſome, the reſentment of others, the old habits of not a few, and I doubt not, the real principles of many, induced them to form a meaſure to overturn the Iriſh adminiſtration. In

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this league, general oppoſition was not bargained for, but as on the terms of their union, the doors of accommodation were ſhut, general oppoſition followed as a neceſſary conſequence. In a country long debarred of its rights, the cauſe of oppoſition muſt have long been a public favourite, and government can hardly be popular, though it may be reſpectable, in a country which it cannot flatter, by humbling the nations of the earth at its feet. Government can do little more in Ireland, than to abſtain from injury, and to let the kingdom grow. You have been reſtored to your rights, but you have been reſtored, not without an appeal to the people, and ſome lively inſtances of popular interpoſition. Succeſs ſeldom checks vivacity, and though the cauſes of that interpoſition have paſſed away, the fondneſs for it remains. It gives to the perſons concerned in it poſſibly ſome real certainty, ſome imaginary conſequence. They can utter, at no expence, the proudeſt language of ſelf-denying ſenators; the city will toaſt them through all its clubs, and the newſpapers will praiſe them through all their paragraphs. Since your Revolution in 1782, for I will give that name to the greateſt event in your hiſtory (one of the moſt reſpectable I think, in any hiſtory). This deſcription of men has been buſy enough, and by their buſtle they have gained a degree of celebrity little ſuited to their rank or to their talents. *They* gave riſe to your Military *Convention*, which was formidable indeed, till it ſent forth a fooliſh Plan of Reform,

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and died of the firmneſs of government, and of its own nonſenſe. *They* attempted a National *Congreſs*, but they were unequal to the taſk, and that project, I think, was ſtill-born. A ſet of men, not unlike ſome perſonages in England, who upon the ſettled diſpoſitions of the people have leſs effect, though perhaps they have better talents; but with you, a dangerous tribe, with whom the reſtleſs religioniſt, the deſperate adventurer, and the ſecret traitor can mix with facility. It is no reproach to Ireland that it has ſuch characters—

——Nam Catalinam
Quocunque in populo videas, quocunque ſub axe.

Nor is it a reproach, that the circumſtances of your late ſituation, which enabled them to mix with the uſeful, ſhould give them ſome continued importance. But it is time that you ſhould begin to know them—no matter to *them* what is the immediate cauſe of ſedition, or of diſcontent which may lead to it. All tumult to *them* ſeems good, and delightful, and hopeful, and conducive to ſome purpoſe of their particular deſign or inſanity. All oppoſition, to them ſeems good, becauſe it may lead to ſomething better. Defeated in their attempts againſt your Parliament, and unable to ſtand by their own ſtrength, their natural wiſh was to wind themſelves round the ſtems of ſome ſenatorial characters. Though the tree muſt be impaired, the creeper would be ſupported. In the Whig Club a new proſpect opened to them

them. Their darling object, a Fourth Eſtate, ſitting in judgment upon Parliament, from whoſe new popular tribunal they might iſſue their decrees, was not forgotten, though it ſeemed almoſt hopeleſs.

To a party formed upon principle, one of the firſt objects ſhould have been to be *ſelect*—if in their firſt aſſociation they had been found to yield a little to convenience or to neceſſity, I think that they ought not to have gone beyond the neceſſity. Perſons of parliamentary conſequence might perhaps be admitted, without a ſevere ſcrutiny into their conduct or principles. Yet to go very far even in *that* line, would be to give up ſomething. A party formed upon *principle*, ought to ſtand upon *character*. Party connection implies a preference of thoſe connected, to thoſe who are without its pale; and preference cannot operate upon a change of miniſtry without excluſions; excluſions narrow the option of merit and ability: in England this is a neceſſary evil, in Ireland, I believe it to be a greater evil, but by no means ſo neceſſary. High characters your Whig Club contains undoubtedly, and men who ought to have, and perhaps may have no inconſiderable ſhare in the government of their country. If party could be always diſcreet, they are men from whom I ſhould expect the higheſt diſcretion, but I am yet to learn, what advantage they are likely to derive from ſo intimate a connection with ſome even of their parliamentary aſſociates.

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If theſe latter be too few to procure ſucceſs by numbers, they rather obſtruct ſucceſs by character. If they be uſeleſs in *producing* a change—when a change may come, they will be incumbrances—to a coalition, they will be impediments.

You will admit at leaſt, that a party upon principle ought to ſtop ſomewhere—it ſhould be a party *in* Parliament, and not *againſt* Parliament. It ſhould avoid the peculiar vice to which the habits of the times are liable. It ſhould exclude the rabble of country and city aſſociations, the known diſturbers of public tranquility; the men, who, to their power, make you in war ſuſpected, and in peace ridiculous. Obſerve here the difference between Engliſh and Iriſh party. There are enough of this ſort in England, and in certain aſſociations, of much private cabal; but at preſent (thank God) of little public effect. Perſons of an higher deſcription may occaſionally be found in their company; but have you ever heard that this ſet of men have been embodied with the confederated leaders of any Engliſh oppoſition, that they formed part of a council where the meaſures of party were to be deviſed and diſcuſſed, or that ſuch a council had formed itſelf into a tribunal of appeal and cenſure, over the conſtitutional and legal tribunals of the land. It was eaſy to foreſee, that if the doors of your ſociety ſhould be thrown open to perſons out of Parliament, enough of thoſe gentry would ac-

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cept the invitation. It ſeemed obvious to reflect, that if *many* were admitted, the leaders of your oppoſition would be ſoon outnumbered in their own Club, and if but a *few* were to be choſen, your party could gain neither force nor dignity by their acceſſion. It muſt be as much the object of theſe agitators to change the nature of your Club into one of their beloved aſſemblies for *ſuperintending Parliament*, as it was the intereſt of the Parliamentary Members to keep it pure and conſtitutional. The object of the leaders is probably to form an honourable adminiſtration, in which their meaſures would be carried, and their intereſts not neglected. A fair and an honorable object, and no diſgrace to the reſpectable men who have formed a party to accompliſh it. In the proſecution of their plan they were liable to one danger, to the loſs of temper. Party is apt to grow angry, and anger is always unguarded. A popular cry is every where pleaſant, popular inſtruments are every where ready, but no where ſo dangerous as in Ireland. The noiſy might get in firſt, the ſeditious might follow. The prudent meaſure would have been, to have ſhut the door at once, and upon them all. The time might come, when they might, by ſuch aſſociates, be ſeduced or overborn to countenance ſomething worſe than tumult, to diſparage the national faith, and to make a diverſion in favour of the enemies of the empire in its ſecond city. Yes—it would have been prudent to have ſhut the door.

What

What was my aſtoniſhment when I heard that your Whig Club had fallen *at once* into the groſſeſt error, into which time, or unlucky circumſtance, or blind violence could poſſibly have plunged them. The empire ſeemed on the brink of a war, whoſe principle was the protection of all its ſhipping and all its ſettlements. Fifty thouſand men, and five thouſand cannon, the forerunners of a greater armament, were preparing to vindicate and to protect us. War was likely, but not inevitable. The force and the unanimity of the empire might prevent it. Your Parliament had not been deficient in the general cauſe. It had granted a ſupply, trivial, if we count the coin, but valuable indeed, if enhanced by the cheap contribution of affection and tranquility. All that was generous in feeling, all that was wiſe in policy, forbade you to diminiſh your gift, or to poiſon the ſweetneſs of affection, by any indiſcretion. Engliſh oppoſition had ſet you no bad example—let me aſk you, if this was not the very time, in which a vulgar ſedition reared its fooliſh head in the ſtreets of your metropolis? The authors were better verſed in newſpapers than in hiſtory, but had they read all the hiſtories of rebellions, which time has tranſmitted to us, they could not have choſen the ſymbol of one more atrocious, than that which they ſelected. It ſhould ſeem that ſome demon, the enemy of your honour, had inſtructed their untutored folly, how to extract the very eſſence of offence:—It was the time of doubtful war—the

very firſt which had menaced you after *that*, wherein you made a ſolemn engagement to ſtand or fall with Great Britain—the ſymbol was not only that of the bloodieſt democracy which ever diſgraced human nature, but of a democracy even then in arms, and whoſe intentions, with reſpect to us, were at that moment undecided. The appearances of internal diſunion might encourage them to war—the ſymptoms of a kindred turbulence might produce offers of aſſiſtance more dangerous than their hoſtility. What was the motive or the pretence of this public affectation of treaſon? Had the ordinary tribunals of the land been ſubverted or ſhut up? Was nothing left to you, but the laſt reſource of injured nations? No—the cauſe had not yet been brought into your courts—*they* were ready to receive it, and it is not impoſſible that the great apprehenſion of your incendiaries was, not that the cauſe might be loſt, but that it might be carried. Tell me not, that theſe men were blundering bullies, profeſſing crimes which they did not intend, and ſeeking the infamy they did not deſerve. Had they ſprung ſuddenly out of the earth, we might believe you. But they were men of no new deſcription, no new variety of the human ſpecies. We have heard of them before, and often. Remember your National Congreſs, remember your Tarrers and Featherers, and the ſame perſons come forward again like no unpractiſed incendiaries, they come with ſedition in their hats and law opinions in their pockets. Their oſtentation

is treaſon—their acts are guarded;—in their violence they are never deſerted by their cunning. They know how to inſtigate others, and to keep themſelves in ſecurity. They can prepare for the *happy moment*, threatening at once, and evading the law—this is an *old* trade. The man, by whoſe arts the city of London was ſo near its ruin, knew how to eſcape conviction. It is painful to recollect, that almoſt the ſame packet brought the account of thoſe extravagancies, and of the election of their reputed authors into your Whig Club.

It is but fair to conclude, that your leaders had better grounds on which to judge of theſe men, and of their true characters, than what has appeared to the public. Their names have been ſeldom heard of, except in times of tumult. The public cannot enter into the nice variations of character; it is apt to judge of men by what they ſeem publicly to profeſs, particularly if they profeſs *crimes*. Coupling the admiſſion of the men with a publication which did not diſcountenance the act, (it was ſaid to countenance it, but that was not true) it was natural to ſuppoſe, that the act itſelf was approved. Why was there even the ſemblance of ſuch an approbation? Why muſt we have a reference to the characters of truly reſpectable men, in order to acquit them againſt appearances? The whole tranſaction appears unguarded, and in the extreme. The reputation of your leaders ſhould remain unimpeached,

impeached, but the club is contaminated. For the good of both countries, for the honour of its beſt members, it would be better that it ſhould never meet again. One good, indeed, has reſulted from what has happened—the general diſpoſition of the people to loyalty and good order has been proved upon a trying occaſion, without the coercion of law, or the interpoſition of popular authorities—the madneſs died away—the national cockades did not ſpread themſelves through the land. I congratulate the nation on the experiment, and on the failure of it. It was made at the moment of expected war and of French ſedition; it expired in the contempt and ridicule of a people, who, though not deaf to clamour, are not refined or corrupted by a falſe philoſophy. The good old ſentiments of loyalty are not out of faſhion amongſt you, they protected you as guardian angels, againſt a dangerous contagion, and perhaps to ſome they ſupplied the place of argument, and led them to their true intereſts, by a generous inſtinct. The moſt extenſive view of your condition in all its complications, the ſoundeſt inveſtigation of all your projects can give you no better maxim than this;—that the two great improvers of Ireland muſt be *tranquility* and *time*. Tranquility, which to England is but *enjoyment*, to you is *progreſs*. The angles of your contending religions are wearing away by *time*—your ſettlement ſtrengthens by *time*, and by every change of property which follows time and commerce;—perhaps it at the

firſt was *pillage*; it would now be *pillage* to reverſe it. The poverty of your peaſants, your only real misfortune, will be cured by *time*—and the progreſs of induſtry and ſettled law. *Time* is giving you union, and wealth, and numbers, and *they muſt* give you *power*;—more than you have yet to aſk from nations or from miniſters, will be the natural fruits of power, temperately exerciſed, which is *reſpectability*. It is not likely that this natural order of things will be obſtructed. In ſettled peace, the loyal ſentiments of the people will not be ſo tried and proved as they have been lately, but they will be confirmed. You are liable but to one danger—that the turbulence of ſome amongſt you may prevent thoſe benefits which it cannot accelerate; againſt this you cannot be warned too frequently, for it is not obvious to every capacity, nor agreeable to every temper, to diſcover how unſuitable the popular exertions of 1782 would be to the politics of the preſent day—they cannot be revived, and the attempt would diſgrace you. Great exertions, occationed by great cauſes, are born to ſucceed, and to redreſs nations; ſmall ones are born to fail, and to ſtrengthen governments.

The aſſociation of the wiſe, the mad, the honorable, and the wicked, being formed as I have deſcribed, let us endeavour to diſcover the natural and political tendencies of ſuch a ſociety. The firſt tendency is to encreaſe in numbers; ſelection being given up, almoſt at the outſet, and

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in ſo *diſtinguiſhed* a manner, admiſſion is likely to become every day more eaſy—excluſion to become in a ſhort time impracticable. To ſhut the doors even at this moment, would be the wiſeſt thing which could be done, but it is not the moſt natural thing to expect—It would be in ſome ſort, a confeſſion of their late imprudence, and whom can they exclude without offence, after the admiſſion of ſome of their new members. Yes—I fear they will go on to the injury of themſelves, and of every reſpectable connection in both countries. Numbers will grow on numbers, country clubs will form themſelves, with or without the ſuggeſtion of the principals—committees of correſpondence will follow naturally—unſuſpicious and talkative patriotiſm, deſigning faction, religious rancour, beggarly outrage, and diſguiſed treaſon ſeeking a purchaſer, will be embodied through the land; judge yourſelf if theſe conſequences be natural. If country clubs be *not* formed, then your Whig Club does not extend its roots through the kingdom. The whole idea of a party, whoſe combined and active force can ſhake the government muſt be laid aſide, and if they be, what ſuperintending genius is to preſide over them, whoſe cenſorial judgment and guardian care is to ſift and exclude thoſe dangerous aſſociates. Having yielded the reſerve and chaſtity of their ſociety to the embraces of——— ———, at what moment are they to learn a late diſcretion? In the angers of a reſtive ſeſſion, are they likely to become more

guarded?

guarded? When a popular voice tickles their ears, will that be the moment of leiſure and reflection? Every day, every ſituation, will exhibit ſome new temptation to them. If the popular voice be *low*, they will not be afraid to give it a little freer utterance. If it be *loud*! What!—Will they ſtop at the eve of victory? Having given up ſelection for the ſake of a more extended power, will they give up that power for the ſake of a tardy ſelection? At ſuch a period, the greateſt number of candidates are likely to offer themſelves, and it is not probable that the principle of extenſion will be reſtrained, at the moment when it ſhall appear moſt likely to anſwer all their original purpoſe.

Here then we may contemplate the Whig Club in the ſecond ſtage of its natural progreſs. The ſails are full, the courſe ſtrait, the crew is obedient and numerous. Force at the prow, and wiſdom at the helm—Yes, at *this* period, the crew will ſeem to be obedient. Every reſolution, every meaſure, will be dictated by the parliamentary leaders, and in full *ſeeming* they will wield at will the fierce democracy—they will find in the Whig Club a tractable help-mate, or if it rules them, it will not ſhew it rules. All this while the mine is practiſing under their feet—a confederacy, branching through the land, ſanctioned by the names of the reſpectable, and formed of all the innocent and guilty agents, which opinion, vanity, warmth, idleneſs and

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ſeditious motives, have linked together, will have accuſtomed itſelf to ſpeak as a ſuperintending body, depreciating Parliament, and cenſuring every other tribunal of the land. It will begin to cenſure by inſinuation, it will go on to boldneſs—it will rather follow popular opinions than originate them, till the interference has become popular and national, and until turbulence, embodied with talents and character, has overcome the novelty of a Fourth Eſtate. Such is the natural progreſs of every ſelf-appointed aſſembly, formed on *the ſuperintending principle—Whig Club, Jacobines,* whatever be their names—their nature is every where the ſame, and their power depends no where on their own moderation, but every where upon the ſpirit of the times. The Whig Club, on its outſet, has not been remarkably moderate, or averſe to this interference. On a late diviſion of the Privy Council, they ſeized an early opportunity to ſpeak, *as a Body*, (nay, uſed theſe words) and even by anticipation—to call the cauſe before their own tribunal—the other tribunals were of courſe to ſink in the public eſtimation. It was a little hard however, to arraign directly the deciſion of the courts of law, or the final determination of the Houſe of Lords; for the cauſe had not yet been brought into a court of law. A temporary ſilence would have been no extraordinary inſtance of patience or moderation—I think that to have erected themſelves into a court of appeal, *after* judgment, and not before it, might have ſatisfied new beginners.

ginners. Direct cenſure on thoſe tribunals was impoſſible at a ſtage of the buſineſs in which they had yet done nothing. Inſinuation, I think, was not neglected—"Our reſpect for *decency* prevents "us from going ſo far as to caſt a damp and "deſpondency on appealing to the law of the "land." But afterwards—"There is a farther "objection, could we ſuppoſe the courts of law "capable of a criminal decliſion, we have a "miniſtry diſpoſed to give them protection." I ſhall not dwell much upon this paſſage, there are inferences which are ſo plain, that they may be left to every underſtanding. It needs no comment, it contains no new ſpecies of dexterity—*without ſneering*, we may *teach the reſt to ſneer*, and without defaming, we may teach others to defame. If I ſhall be told by any one, that this paſſage contains no impeachment of the integrity of the courts, or of the incorruptibility of the final judicature, I ſhall with the gentleman much joy of his logic, and if he goes on to tell me, that it was well calculated to ſuggeſt a patient reſpect for the tribunals of the land, to teach the people to look to them, and not to the Whig Club; that it diſcouraged the more ſummary appeal to national cockades, that the ſymbol of a Pariſian ſedition was diſplayed, to diſcourage the people from ſimilar outrages; I ſhall confeſs myſelf to be either unable or unwilling to give him an anſwer. It is the nature of eloquence to exaggerate, and of inſinuation to imply a little too much—the beſt men fall or riſe into theſe modes

of expreſſion, if they be men of fire and talents. I am certain that the authors of theſe reſolutions would have turned with averſion and ſcorn from any man who brawled in the ſtreet, in the following manner:—"You can have little hope, if "you appeal to the law of the law of the land: "your judges are corrupt, and will probably "decide againſt you, though they know you are "in the right, and they are encouraged by a "government who will ſupport their corrupt de-"ciſion in the Houſe of Lords, which they can "influence—you had better go at once to the "laſt reſource." The words of the Whig Club, are very different from theſe—but inſinuation is a dangerous talent, ſuggeſting ideas which it does not expreſs, and ſtealing into the mind with greater ſubtlety—it gives a thought and leaves imagination to work beyond it—its reſerve is pregnant. *This man knows more, much more than he unfolds*—ſimplicity cannot guard againſt it; confederacies cannot long content themſelves with inſinuation alone, and their publications would not be the leſs dangerous, if they could do ſo; whatever be the name which they aſſume, Congreſſes or Whig Clubs (it is new to me that Whigiſm in Ireland is a peculiarity) they ſpeak in order to have effect. Governed by a party which oppoſes the majority of Parliament, they will ſpeak againſt Parliament—if with ſucceſs (and what party wiſhes for failure) they will be reſpected as an aſſembly, inferior indeed in law, but ſuperior in virtue. To this end will all their firſt

proceedings tend, and whilſt they have one great object in purſuit, to which the paſſions of the whole body ſhall be directed, they will ſuffer their ableſt men to lead in the chace of government;—theſe will be the ſplendid days of the ſociety.

But the time may come, when the ſcene and the actors are to change, and the leaders are not unlikely to become the miniſters of the country. This may happen in two ways—let us firſt ſuppoſe that which is the moſt probable:—the adminiſtration in England may be changed, and the Iriſh friends of the preſent ex-miniſter, may be called to power, by every ſentiment of gratitude and alliance, and by all the glowing affection of his nature. The ſtipulated meaſures which form their political teſt, may be meliorated or reformed perhaps, but be they good, or even exceptionable in many particulars, they will be carried. The reſpectable and valuable members will be enabled to pay off the incumbrances of party fidelity. Their friends will be welcome along with them, though perhaps, they themſelves would be full as welcome without ſome of their parliamentary friends. But what miniſter, what meaſures can ſatisfy the general confederacy? What ſphere will be left for their ſuperintending activity? How will the aſſociated corps of political theoriſts, the new companies of metaphyſicians, the independent regiments of zealots, the well dreſſed troop of fools, the whole infantry of

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the diſaffected, and all the non-commiſſioned officers of ſedition and clamour, diſband upon the peace of party? How will they rave at the duplicity of man, when they ſhall make this diſcovery—that their leaders having got into government, are no longer in oppoſition? Here I will not pretend to propheſy, for who can foretell the progreſs of madneſs—ſo far I may predict indeed, that in proportion as the Whig Club ſhall extend and riſe to power and celebrity, in nearly the ſame proportion the authors of it will have cauſe to lament the inſtitution. I will indeed venture to propheſy this—that they will not be ſilent. Had you found by the practice of Ireland, that triumphant talkers had ever learned *ſilence* from their triumphs, I yet would venture to tell you, that ſuch an inſtance is rare in human nature. But in what manner the habitual ſuperintendency of Parliament will firſt diſplay itſelf, whether it will evaporate after one dangerous exploſion, or whether a continued wild-fire will alarm and ſcorch you, is beyond my powers of prediction.

Towards the event which I have ſuppoſed, the inſtitute of a Whig Club will have contributed nothing, and the moſt turbulent members will be ready to give to themſelves the whole credit—the parliamentary leaders cannot be ſeated in the offices of ſtate, without either numerous and uncompenſated diſmiſſions, or new burdens on the country;—and the oppoſition which will be formed

formed against them, will neither want popular topics, nor popular instruments. Whether their persons will want the protection of the military, or of the police, which they will have abolished, may be problematical: but that their own instrument will recoil, that a voice will be raised against them, that the voice will be called a national one, and may appear to be so, is more than likely. To the prosperity of any country, but especially of a connected country, two things are necessary—that it should know how to oppose, and how to be satisfied; to be incapable of the latter, is to repress every generous enthusiasm in its favour. If the voice shall be raised a second time against the administration, with which the authors of the Whig Club will be connected, they may thank their own counsels for the event—they are forging the instrument of their own disquiet, and of national disreputation.

Let us come to another event, towards the production of which the Whig Club may be an efficient instrument, and for which it was probably formed and vulgarized—the Irish administration may be overthrown, the English being unshaken—and here I feel something to make me pause—for if my slight portion of reason does not deceive me, if I am about to write any thing which may dissuade sense or virtue from pursuing a dangerous course, I am also about to say what may encourage vice and violence to proceed with accelerated impetuosity. I am about to hold out

hopes

hopes to every ſeditious man, of power ſuch as he could never expect, and of turbulence beyond his morning dream. I have the fate of the Beggar's Opera before me, which was forbidden, leſt it might encourage the vice which it meant to ſatirize. Let us go on however, without my encouragement, the Whig Club will never want the proffered ſociety of thoſe who can diſgrace it, either by their names or their conduct, though they may not perceive the extenſive influence which may await them. Let us reaſon with thoſe who are capable of expoſtulation—let us come then to our laſt ſuppoſition—the event is not a likely one, but as it is that, for which the Club appears to have been formed, as it is the great purpoſe for which men of great conſideration have formed ſome alliances, in themſelves not ſplendid, as it is the conqueſt for which they have ſtooped, let us view it in its probable conſequences. We will ſuppoſe the Iriſh adminiſtration to be overthrown by the united engines of aſſociated force, by a formed, active and diſciplined body, branching through the land, uſing all the accuſtomed inſtruments of party, and acting with all the energy of an extenſive confederacy—I ſhould be ſorry to wrong the authors of the Club, or their intentions—I am incapable of believing their deſigns to be guilty, though I am free to think them very imprudent; but if you ſhall be told that the overthrow of the Iriſh adminiſtration was but a ſecondary motive, and that the primary object was to carry certain bills which are made

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the teſt of the candidates, you will judge from facts. If theſe bills have been the conſtant deſire of the leading members, conclude if you pleaſe, that an enthuſiaſm which over-rates their value, has deviſed the Club for the ſake of the meaſures. But if you find that thoſe bills have been directly or vehemently oppoſed, by ſome of the leading members of the Club, and by others according to their talents, you will naturally conclude, that the meaſures were acceded to for the ſake of the aſſociation. Some meaſures were undoubtedly neceſſary to give their purpoſe a colour. Certain objects muſt be held out to the public, particularly to the public of Ireland, by any party which would engage their attention, to ſupport a particular man; without ſpecific meaſures, might have effect in England, but it is for a good reaſon; it is becauſe the appointment of a particular man to the helm of the empire, is in itſelf a great and a productive meaſure. When the nation called the late Lord Chatham (then Mr Pitt) to the adminiſtration, they called in fact for meaſures, though none were ſpecified; they called for wiſdom, for energy, for ſucceſsful war, for a ſuperiority over the nations of the earth; this would not be calculated for your meridian. To be an honeſt man and fit for this office, is in Ireland to be deſerving of it. In England, nothing is ſo difficult as the real nature of office, and the name. The firſt Lord of the Treaſury, may be the moſt punctual of treaſurers, and yet totally unfit for his ſituation. I ſee no original

connection

connection between the office of a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the knowledge of finance—"Do they underſtand treaties—can they direct "armaments—have they minds which can em-"brace the world?" Theſe are the queſtions to be aſked in the choice of Britiſh miniſters. Perhaps it is happy for you that you need not aſk ſuch queſtions. In England, greatneſs of mind and of talents, are every thing in a miniſter, official practice is as nothing. Offices which are with you miniſterial, are in England ſubordinate, and the officers are continued under every change of miniſters. It is therefore no eaſy matter to intereſt the Iriſh nation in the preference or the excluſion of certain men, ſufficiently to anſwer the purpoſe of party. The introduction of Engliſh party, and the cabineting ſpirit which accompanies it is new to you, and by no means neceſſary in itſelf; the excluſive preference of men muſt be waſhed down by meaſures, to make you ſwallow it; therefore your Whig Club was forced to deviſe meaſures; if they could have choſen more eſſential ones, I muſt conclude they would have done ſo. Thoſe which would be moſt immediately conducive to their own power, do not ſeem to be omitted in the catalogue.

Let us then conſider, how the ſucceſs of the Iriſh confederacy would operate, if they ſhould *force* themſelves into power, connected with the Engliſh oppoſition, and the Iriſh Whig Club; how far ſuch alliance and ſupport is likely to affect

public

public meaſures, and to miſlead even the integrity of the mind, and what will be the real nature of a government ſo conſtituted? You will not be likely to confound two ſuppoſitions ſo eſſentially different in their effects, as the reconciliation of thoſe Gentlemen to government, and their victory over it. The firſt, I think, devoutly to be wiſhed; the latter, the object of the Whig Club, and the ſubject of this letter. Tranſport yourſelf, in imagination, to that period, when ſome of the beſt men amongſt you, after the habits of an oppoſition, connected upon a principle new to Ireland, (the principle of ſubverting, not controuling the adminiſtration) and farther connected with the active body already deſcribed, ſhall force themſelves into power and office: the Britiſh adminiſtration unſhaken, the Iriſh adminiſtration capitulating: with how many intereſted, how many ignorant acclamations will the fatal machine be welcomed.

——— Pueri circum innuptæque puellæ
Sacra canunt, ———

An adminiſtration truly Iriſh! brought in upon the ſhoulders of a popular body, relying upon popularity for its ſupport, ſecure, not by ſervility to a Lord Lieutenant, but by a ſtern controul over him. No tools of a Britiſh miniſter, but connected with his opponents; obnoxious to the repreſentative of the Britiſh miniſter who would diſplace them at once, if the nerve of popular exertion ſhould be relaxed, raiſing the tone of

the popular voice, not only for their paſſions, but for their ſafety, allied to an active confederacy, through whoſe organs the bleſſings of liberty will be preached, and the charms of eloquence diſſeminated. Happy days! Popular government! Perpetual invention of new meaſures for the benefit of Ireland!

It will be time for that active body to know its own importance. They have followed long enough, why not lead a little now and then? The ſtipulated bills being paſſed, other objects muſt be looked for. The leaders have got their meaſures, and they have got offices—the Club (which has done every thing for them) ought to begin to conſider itſelf a little—freſh game ought to be ſtarted, for what is a Club without reſolutions? beſides, a popular cry ought to be kept up, even for the ſake of the popular adminiſtration; they are grown too languid, ſince they have become miniſters, they muſt be ſpurred a little for their own good. It will be very natural for the Whig Club to addreſs them now and then, as follows: "My Lords and Gentlemen, "we have a very great regard for you—you "know very well that we made you our gover- "nors, and if you be not ſupported by popu- "larity, which is under our direction, you know "very well that the Lord Lieutenant will turn "you out, as ſoon as he dares. As to us, we "are the moſt moderate men in the World, and "extremely unlike the Jacobines of France, to

"whom

"whom ignorant people liken us. All we inſiſt "upon is, that you will carry into effect *theſe* "*plans*, and propoſe theſe motions, which are "very popular, and extremely well digeſted?"— Or elſe!

Safer we may ſpeculate; but who can foretell all the glories of the kingdom of the elect? The rare inventions of the diſcerning patriots, the auxiliary tumults, the neceſſary puniſhments of delinquents. Tar and feathers were borrowed ideas. Patriotiſm, directing government, ought to prove her capacity by inventing ſomething original.

I have but one idea to oppoſe to this *order of things*, that from the moment wherein ſuch a government ſhall prevail, Ireland will begin to diverge from Great Britain—you have broken the chains which bound you to her, and from that day you will begin to cut the ſilken bonds which keep you together—the connection of the two countries is through the King, and the operation and efficacy of a king is not by a magical word, but by a real power exerciſed by his miniſters, interwoven with your ſyſtem, and giving combination to all its parts. Let me aſk any man who is not a mere theoriſt, whether the functions of the executive power be not really exerciſed through the medium of miniſters. If the political enemies of the Britiſh executive miniſters are to direct the Iriſh executive, what is our connection? If the union or conſolidation of the two executives

executives is neceſſary to keep us together, are you in your ſenſes, and will you tell me that the *hoſtility* of the two executives can anſwer the ſame purpoſe? You will indeed have a titular repreſentative of the Britiſh executive in the perſon of the Lord Lieutenant: but he will have as little power as the Turkiſh Pacha has in Egypt, to whom the Beys of the Mamalukes hold out a ſignal, and he departs. To ſome external purpoſes the Britiſh miniſter would ſtill have power—power to hurt you—I hope he would not uſe it, but it is a fooliſh ſyſtem, that is to point the paſſions of the governor againſt the intereſt of the governed—it is abſurd to truſt negociations in the hands of enemies. If the diſpoſition of the Britiſh miniſter be above reſentment, his ſituation will cauſe ſuſpicion to rankle, and the degree of power which muſt remain to him, will be a ſource of diſtruſt, tending to a hatred of the Britiſh connection—you will imagine he will feel your ſtrength, as his weakneſs, and the growing proſperity of Ireland, as his growing antagoniſt—you have had enough of theſe ſuggeſtions ſcattered amongſt you already, though you had not yet erected a college or a prieſthood for their promulgation.

Such would be the ſtate of things in Ireland, if your Whig Club ſhould extend itſelf, as I think it will, and if it ſhould prevail, as I think it will not. But if you aſk me, whether I ſhould not have ſimilar apprehenſions, if a party ſhould prevail

prevail in England and govern the executive there? I anſwer no, I ſhould not. Firſt, it would not be a party ſo formed, nor ſo connected, nor ſo ſupported by any endemial diſtemper of the public mind; but chiefly becauſe an Engliſh party, ſeizing the helm, would hold *the helm of the empire*—the unity of the executive in both countries would be preſerved.

No man likes better than I do, the mutual checks and controuls which are to be found in our conſtitution—but it is one thing to like a controul upon the cabinet, and another thing to wiſh for hoſtilities in the cabinets, or to wiſh for hoſtile cabinets in two countries, who are to be kept together by the organ of the executive.

This unfortunate adminiſtration, built as it would be, on the ſhifting ſand of reſtleſſneſs, would receive a temporary ſupport from the bills which are the teſt of admiſſion into the Whig Club, not from the popularity which the paſſing ſuch bills would gain them, (for we have ſeen greater meaſures forgotten) but from the ſolid power which theſe bills are calculated to confer upon the oligarchy. It is a new thing to ſee meaſures held out as a public boon, which would directly operate for the particular benefit of the propoſers, popularity is generally ſought by ſacrifices, and not by aſſumptions—the bill for limitting penſions, ſeems to me to be grounded on a rational principle, applicable

applicable to every monarchy—it is oppoſed by your preſent government, probably, becauſe it would be a reſtraint upon them. They are bound in honor not to diſplace the preſent penſioners, and if the liſt was limitted, they might have no penſions to grant—If they meant not to increaſe the liſt, they would wiſh to have ſome credit for their forbearance—it is therefore very natural they ſhould not like the bill, whether they do or do not intend to miſuſe their power—but to a party coming in, on the principle of diſmiſſing others, I think the penſion bill limitted, in the manner propoſed in the laſt ſeſſion of your Parliament, *would be ready money.* The propoſal was, to limit the liſt to 80,000 pounds, *per annum*, excluſive of penſions to the Royal Family or by Parliament. Now it is obvious, that the ſtriking off a few of the penſions of their opponents, would leave vacancies in the 80,000l. for their friends. The bill too ſays, that no penſioner during pleaſure, ſhall ſit in Parliament—ſo much the better for their friends—they have tried thoſe friends who are in Parliament, who deſerve penſions for life, and who can take none others. In a country where long years of party urge *their deſtined courſe*, this independent proviſion for their friends would be very convenient: it would be honorable—but the bill is not diſintereſted.

The reſponſibility bill would add to their power more materially, though not by any means ſo obviouſly—the moment that bill ſhall be paſſed, the Lord Lieutenant cannot iſſue

a ſhilling out of the produce of the revenue additional or hereditary, without the ſignature of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of other officers. In the appointment to offices theſe are not amongſt the offices likely to be forgotten—it would be unjuſt that theſe officers were to be reſponſible for expenditure, if they were not to judge of the propriety of it; of courſe they are to judge and to decide—what then is the Lord Lieutenant?

The repeal of the police bill, may reſtore to full power the principal and notorious inſtruments of popular turbulence—the bill of repeal or reformation, has been kept back—we will judge of it when we ſee it, perhaps it may, and perhaps it may not, leave the Lord Lieutenant and his friends at the mercy of the populace—they were ſo once, and a brave man of a brave family, was not terrified or baniſhed by their outrages—beauty and the graces, were indeed compelled to fly, but that was a time when party was not rife or embodied. The leaders of ſedition herded only with aſſociates who were fit for them.

Here we ſee three things preparing, all of them applicable to the ſtrength of party—gratification of friends—chains upon the Lord Lieutenant held by themſelves—the ſecurity of his perſon, and of the ſeat of government, left dependant upon their inſtruments. Want of forecaſt is certainly not the objection to theſe projects; if they have a fault in their policy, it is that there is too much *addreſs* in the conception

conception of them; it is the nature of man to wiſh for power, and of good men to believe they will never miſuſe it—I know no men more fit to be entruſted than ſome amongſt you, but I muſt lament, that they are not more fortunate in ſome of their aſſociates, and that in the conſciouſneſs of their own worth, they have almoſt ſought temptations: the name of one of them will live for ever, and of others, I think very highly, but to wiſh them ſucceſs, would be to wiſh them danger—danger to themſelves, to their nation, and to every connection in England that they regard or cultivate.

I have ſuppoſed this Club to increaſe and to ſucceed, and the adminiſtration of the country to be laid at their feet—whilſt the intercourſe of mutual diſtruſt and hatred will take its courſe, between the conquered viceroy and the new and victorious cabinet—whilſt that cabinet will be employed in yielding to, or parrying the ſuperintending turbulence of their own agents, whilſt thoſe agents will be occupied in the enjoyment and abuſe of their acquired power, the nation is not likely to improve, either in condition or in ſentiment. Univerſal jealouſy, local tumults, faction a trade, inflammation a ſcience, treaſon diſguiſed and buſy, ſectaries certainly not idle, England ſuſpected, the adminiſtration of England hoſtile, the rancour of party poiſoning poliſhed ſociety, diſturbing the inferior orders, debaſing the public mind, and deſtroying the national character: theſe are but the ſeeds of the poiſonous plants which will be ſown; the hot and fertile ſoil of party may produce

produce new ſpecies, of a larger growth, and of more quick and ſubtle qualities. All this while, the Engliſh friends of the new Iriſh cabinet will incur no trivial cenſure, and will not reap the ſmalleſt advantage; the diſturbed ſtate of Ireland, attributed to their connected friends, will be no recommendation of them to the Britiſh Nation —Ireland cannot diſplace a Britiſh miniſter—an Engliſh oppoſition may wiſh for a bad treaty or an unſucceſsful war, if they be unprincipled, for theſe events might ſerve them perſonally; but they cannot wiſh for diſturbance in Ireland, unleſs they be *fooliſh*—it would be of no more advantage to them than lightning, which would deſtroy the fleet, or peſtilence that would thin the people! The beſt council which they can give to their Iriſh friends, is to follow the fortunes of Great Britain, which they indeed may impair, but which they cannot direct. It is the intereſt of every Britiſh adminiſtration to receive Ireland connected in wiſh and feelings with Great Britain itſelf, and not with any Britiſh party, tranquil and in good order. It is the intereſt of Ireland, that every Britiſh party ſhould deem the proſperity of Ireland to be an acceſſion to the ſtrength of the empire, and no impediment or danger to themſelves. This opinion being fixed and eſtabliſhed, (it was ſo till very lately, I hope it is not yet much ſhaken) will be of more advantage to you than all the projects which genius may in-

vent, or eloquence may render popular. To preſerve this opinion, you ſhould eradicate Engliſh party from amongſt you, even to the idea of it. An oligarchy, connected with Engliſh party, may obtain or may accelerate the paſſing of a bill, which you may be taught to value beyond its deſerts, but it will tend to cancel thoſe formed opinions and fixed reliances which you have eſtabliſhed, and which are neceſſary even to your ſecurity—Lord Lieutenants may hurt you a little, for I know of no perfect governments; vexed by an oligarchy only, you may be undone.

If you approve of the bills which the Whig Club have offered to the nation, you can ſupport the bills, or ſuch of them as you approve, without being drawn into the vortex of the confederacy—you can do ſo without expoſing yourſelf to the contagion of a party ſpirit—you can maintain your integrity, without giving up your independence, without aſſociating with the worſt, or being enſlaved to a factious alliance, which tends to pervert the beſt—Unconnected independence, which in England would be but uſeleſs ſingularity, would in the preſent ſtate of Iriſh politics be real conſequence—you will then be able to weigh in an unbiaſſed mind, the value of the meaſures propoſed, and the dangers ariſing from the means which are employed—perhaps too you may be of opinion, that the meaſures themſelves are not thoſe which would moſt naturally occur to enlightened

lightened patriotiſm—conſider the following meaſures;

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All theſe may not be practicable, perhaps they may not all be eligible—to judge of their propriety, or of the time in which they ſhould be propoſed, you will judge not only of their intrinſic value, but of the ſtate of the country, of the relation which ſhe bears to others, of the ſpirit of the times, and of the effects of the propoſitions you may bring forward, if thoſe propoſitions ſhould fail, as well as if they ſhould ſucceed.

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"

If you think this letter can be of any ſervice, and will take the trouble to eraſe the paſſages I have marked, you are at liberty to communicate the remainder.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

THE END.

All these may not be practicable, perhaps they may not all be eligible—to judge of their propriety, or of the time in which they should be proposed, you will judge not only of their intrinsic value, but of the state of the country, of the relation which the bears to others, of the spirit of the times, and of the effects of the propositions you may bring forward. If these propositions should fail, as well as if they should succeed.

If you think this letter can be of any service, and will take the trouble to crack the paragres I have marked, you are at liberty to communicate the remainder.

I am, &c. &c. &c.

THE END.

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